

## SELECT STORY.

### AN INDIAN'S REVENGE.

BY RALPH KINGWOOD.

Where the Kentucky river cuts its way through the mountains, leaving upon either bank, rugged cliffs that lift their summits five hundred and a thousand feet, as the case may be, above the stream, there lived in the early times a settler by the name of Rufus Branson, who, with his wife and only child, a charming little girl of some eight or nine years, occupied the rustic cabin at the base of the precipice a little back from the river.

Although greatly exposed to danger—the Indians at the time being plentiful throughout the region—he managed to live peaceably for several years. The Indians frequently visited the rude home of the hunter, and being always welcomed and provided with such food as might be in the larder, they maintained a friendly attitude.

Especially were they fond of the child Maggie, and more than one fierce warrior had been seen sitting on the grass in front of the cabin, listening to the prattle of that little one or else engaged in making it some toy or playing from willow twigs or plant bark.

In this manner things went on for some time, and Rufus Branson came to feel as sure as though he was within the walls of a frontier fort.

One evening Branson and his wife were seated near the doorway, when suddenly a shadow fell across the threshold, and the next moment a tall savage whose reeling step and bloodshot eyes told that he was intoxicated, appeared, and staggering to the log steps thrust himself upon them.

His first demand was for "fire water," which was of course refused on the plea that there was none in the house.

The Indian became cross and ugly, wearing with terrible curses that if the liquor was not produced he would murder the whole household. Branson was a brave, determined man, and although dreading the necessity, yet he saw that he would have to take steps to prevent the savage from executing his threat.

Waiting until the warrior had made a demonstration, which he soon did by attempting to draw his tomahawk, Branson sprang upon him, knocked him down with a blow of his fist, and then quietly disarmed him and bound him where he lay.

After a few minutes of furious raving, and futile efforts to free himself the savage rolled over and sunk into a drunken slumber.

He did not wake until the next morning, but before he did so the settler had quietly removed his bonds and restored his weapons, which he lay by the sleeper's side.

The savage on awaking rose slowly to his feet, felt his wrists as though the things had left a feeling there, took up his weapons, and, without speaking a word, left and disappeared in the timber near by.

"What think you of that?" asked the wife, turning to her husband with beaming eyes.

"Pshaw! Don't trouble your head about the drunken brute," answered the settler lightly, but as he turned away and stepped into the yard he muttered: "Like it! Well not much. The fellow must be watched. I was in hopes that he would not have the sense to come back, but the lump where my fist landed was enough, if nothing else, to recall the circumstances."

The summer passed and they saw their drunken guest no more. He failed to make his appearance. But as the leaves began to fall in the latter end of the year, while returning from a hunt on the hills and passing through a dense piece of timber not far from the house, caught sight of a figure lurking among the bushes, but which quickly disappeared when he advanced toward where it was.

The figure was that of an Indian warrior, and Rufus Branson knew it was the one whom he had knocked down and bound the previous summer.

The knowledge was not in any way comforting, and hence he did not tell his wife of the discovery. It would only alarm her, without bringing any good result. He simply told her he had discovered bear tracks near by, and that she and the child had better stay close to the house when he was absent.

Several days afterward Rufus Branson heard his dog in the timber down by the river, and knowing they never opened without good cause he caught up his rifle and hastened to where they were barking. They had struck a fresh bear trail, and as he arrived in sight they fairly lifted it going off in a straight line down the river.

The chase led him several miles, and when at last he got his shot that ended Rufus's career he found that it was three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

Swinging his game in a sapling out of reach of cat or wolf, he started for home to get the old gray mare and return to fetch it that night.

Taking a near cut he approached the cabin from the western side, where the timber grew heavy up to within a few rods of the building, and consequently he could not see what was transpiring there until he passed through the wood. This it was that, when within a short distance of his home, he heard a wild, piercing shriek.

He could only guess that something terrible must be taking place beyond the screen of bushes and leaves. Uttering a loud shout that his presence might be sooner known, Branson sprang forward with the leap of a wounded buck, a great fear at his heart, for he had only too clearly recognized the scream and the agonizing voice of his wife.

It took but a moment for him to clear the intervening timber and undergrowth. As he dashed out into the clearing, holding his rifle ready for instant use, he comprehended in one swift glance all that had taken place, and what was further to fear.

Near the end of the cabin facing the cliffs of which I have spoken stood the mother, her face pallid as the Indian's, her arms outstretched, and her eyes fixed on the precipitous heights, up which the figure of an Indian warrior was struggling.

"My child! my child!" cried Rufus Branson, who had been standing by the side of the woman, and who had seen the Indian's arms raised as though he were about to strike.

Firm of heart, and with a nerve as steady as the rocks around, the father for a moment quailed and covered under his quick arms, told him was the deadly peril of his little one.

But he was quick to recover.

The Indian was drawing away; step by step he was increasing the distance, and as he occasionally glanced backward and downward the parents saw in his hide-

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only painted countenance the full purpose that actuated the abductor.

"God bless me!" Branson muttered, and he raised his rifle, glanced through the sights, and touched the trigger.

The Indian started violently at the shot. He was hit, but not badly, and with a yell of fiendish triumph he passed upward.

"Too low by a couple of inches," said a low, calm voice at the settler's elbow. Branson started as though himself had been shot.

Where did the man come from? Who was he? Neither had seen him approach.

But there was no time for explanation. The stranger, a man rather below than above the ordinary height, whose fine, athletic form was well displayed by his closely fitted buckskin garments, then stepped quickly forward one foot in advance, threw up an unusually long rifle, as if preparing to fire.

"For God's sake, stranger, be careful of my child!" cried Branson, while the agonized mother muttered an audible prayer.

"That is my only chance. I know that," said the stranger, who was now within a few paces of the settler. "The Indian was the quick reply, and the sharp click! click! of the hammer as it was drawn back told that the critical time had come.

By this time the Indian had reached the summit of the steep.

The opportunity was seized by the unknown.

Although the savage had taken the precaution to hold the child up in front of himself as a shield, covering nearly the whole of his breast, chest, but leaving his head uncovered, the stranger did not hesitate to make the shot.

For one second, as it gained its position, the rifle wavered, and then instantly became as immovable as if held in a vise.

With clasped hands and straining eyes the parents watched that stately form upon whose skill so much depended.

Suddenly a sharp report rang out, the white smoke drifted away, and as the vision became clear they saw the savage loose his hold upon the child, reel wildly for an instant, and then pitch forward upon the rocks.

It may be imagined that the father was not long in reaching the place where his child lay, and in a few moments more the little one was in its mother's arms.

"Tell us who you are that we may know your name to mingle with our prayers," said the mother, as the stranger prepared to depart.

"My name is Daniel Boone," he said, and was gone.

**Snake-Charmers at Benares.**

One morning two snake-charmers called at the hotel. Around their necks huge bow-constrictors were twined, and each carried jars of smaller snakes, and one of scorpions. The performance consisted in taking the venomous snakes from the jars by the finger of one of the men, and in picking them up, the men placed their fingers in the reptiles' mouths—tantalizing them to a frenzy, and then wrapping the whole about their heads and necks, where the hissing, writhing mass presented a frightful spectacle.

Each man held a finger of one of the men twice, and each time he immediately made use of various charms—placed a small round stone over the cut flesh, smelt of a piece of wood resembling frankincense, and then used it for marking a circle about his wrist. This he told me would protect him from the bite of the poison into the system. The stone draws out the blood, and with it, of course, the virus. It is generally supposed, however, and with much reason, that the poison glands of the cobra have been removed in the first instance by the crafty snake-charmers. Several times the cobras advanced until within a foot of my chair, but turned back at command of their masters. During the entertainment one of the men played at intervals upon a sort of fagot.

The scorpion disengagement consisted in the charmer drawing the reptile out of its hole, and then holding it by the tail, and as he arrived in sight they fairly lifted it going off in a straight line down the river.

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## THE WEST INDIAN PIRATES.

Some years ago the West Indian seas were infested by pirates, of savage audacity and desperate valor. They were composed of men of all nations, runaway sailors from England, Danish, French, and Dutch vessels—though probably, the larger portion of them were men of Spanish race, natives of Cuba, or of the old Spanish settlements of the Southern States of America.

I had taken passage on board the merchant ship Mary, at Belize, and we were on our voyage to Liverpool, when the following incident befell me.

I had seen the captain standing on the after-deck, and from time to time, eagerly surveying with his glass some object in our wake. I walked up to him on one of these occasions, and inquired what he was trying to make out?

"There is a strange vessel in sight," he answered; "but I can't quite make her out."

"What may be one of those British traders that were nearly ready to sail when we left port?" I observed.

"No; she doesn't look like one of that sort. She seems of some bastard rig; but we may make her out by-and-by."

"You don't think we are in danger?" I asked, feeling alarmed, as landmen are usually disposed to be at sea, when they encounter anything that looks mysterious.

"Really! I cannot tell," was his answer; "but I suppose it will be time enough to cry out when we're likely to be hurt."

And so saying, he strode forward with his glass.

Night fell; but the air was so hot and stilling below, that I found sleep next to impossible. If I slept for a moment, I was haunted by dreams of pirates, sharks, and shipwrecks, so I hurried on my clothes, and again sought the deck. The moon was half-way up the heavens, and not a cloud was in sight; countless stars of wondrous beauty and brilliancy gazed down upon the sea, and the ocean was flooded with their light. A long line of quivering rays lay flashing on the bosom of the sea, like a vein of quicksilver, right under the moon's eye. All was quiet, peaceful, and beautiful; it was a magnificent sight, such as is only to be seen within the tropics, and not often even there.

The winds were almost laid. The gentlest possible breeze filled the sails, just enough to keep the ship steady, and to prevent them giving an lurch, though not so much as to make the vessel roll a little heavier than usual on the long swell.

Nothing stirred about the deck. The watch had disappeared forward; but I found the captain still on the alert, and again surveying the remote object he had before observed, through his night glass. I did not interrupt him again by my questionings; I paced the deck in the delicious night air; but my attention was shortly attracted by the sound of the boatman's shrill whistle calling the crew to the deck.

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showed that we had no chance of escape by flight. Our every rag of canvas had been for some time set, and the old lumbering ship, heavily laden as she was, went snorting and groaning through the water. The match was as unequal as between a cart-horse and a thoroughbred race.

Turning my eyes again towards the deck, I found the men all activity and bustle. One group I observed busily engaged in breaking and sawing old iron hoops and spikes. They were for grasping the prize.

"But where are the guns?" I asked of the captain.

"You shall see presently," he replied; "the men are dragging them from their concealment below, for we carry more than the regulation number. In the meantime, may I ask you to go below and look the matter to your fellow passengers. There may be some of the gentlemen not unwilling to aid in the defence of the ship. At present I cannot leave the deck. My wife!"—a shudder seemed to pass across his face, and then he said—"I would to heaven she had not been here!"

I pressed his hand and went below. I saw what was going on, and, crying and weeping, when I informed my fellow passengers of the danger so near at hand. One tender girl there was, fair and graceful, beautiful as light, who displayed the most charming courage and self-possession. She was on her way home to England, in search of the health which she had lost amid the hot swamps of the tropics. It might be that she felt the hand of death already upon her, and the idea that would her to live with this feeble, she did not so much as flinch. She did not so much as flinch. She did not so much as flinch.

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